

INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEET

Bush or Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*)

Description: Amur honeysuckle is a deciduous bush in the Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae), known for its appeal as a backyard landscaping shrub and its sweet-smelling white and yellow flowers. The bush may grow to heights of six to twenty feet. Bush honeysuckle is distinctive in many forests because it is one of the first understory plants to leaf out in the spring.

Leaves are opposite and egg-shaped with pointed ends and short petioles. Flowers are white, fading to yellow as they age. The bushes flower in early to late spring and have a distinctive sweet scent. The fruits are red or yellow and are found in pairs on the leaf axis.

The plants spread through berry distribution by birds. Seeds typically need a cold stratification period before germinating.



photo by: KSNPC Staff

Habitat: Bush honeysuckle is native to Asia and western Europe. Bush honeysuckle can establish within a broad range of moisture regimes and habitats, particularly where there has been disturbance. Wetlands, prairies, and forested communities are all susceptible to invasion. Seedlings are often found under tall shrubs and trees where birds have perched. Amur honeysuckle is moderately shade tolerant, and in Kentucky it competes especially well in canopy gaps and woodland edges.

Threat: Bush honeysuckle is particularly threatening to natural areas because it is adaptive to a variety of ecosystems. Bush honeysuckle rapidly invades and forms a dense shrub layer that shades out native plant species. Control of honeysuckle in natural areas is thwarted by the continuation of honeysuckle planted as a backyard ornamental plant.

Distribution: Bush honeysuckle is found throughout the eastern United States. In Kentucky it is found throughout north, central, and western portions of the state.

Control: In areas with young plants and moist soil, hand-pulling of the stems and roots is an acceptable control method. The entire root should be removed to ensure that the plant will not resprout. Care should be taken to disturb the soil as little as possible.

For larger plants, cut stems off horizontally near the base with hand loppers or a saw. Immediately paint or spray the stump with a 25% solution of glyphosate (Roundup) or triclopyr (Garlon 3A) and water, taking care to completely cover the cambium with herbicide solution.

For larger populations, a foliar application of a 2% solution of Roundup or Garlon plus a non-ionic surfactant and water is an effective control method. Use a low pressure and coarse spray pattern to reduce spray drift damage to non-target species.

Prescribed burning has shown some effectiveness for bush honeysuckle growing in open fire-adaptive habitats. It may be necessary to repeat the burns annually or every two years for effective control.

All control methods should be done prior to seed dispersal in late summer to early autumn and should be repeated if necessary.



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